

that he would not have envisaged before Sharpeville removed his last hopes of retaining the status quo and calling it apartheid.

There is also an underlying difference in principle. One side believes it is right and courageous to seize Transkeian independence as a weapon against apartheid as a whole. The other considers that to touch anything Dr. Verwoerd offends, and will paralyse those who would otherwise be fighting against apartheid.

This must not be seen just as the old argument between infiltration and subverting on the one hand, and non-collaboration on the other. Transkeian independence could be forged into a weapon against White supremacy without compromise on the part of those who used it. It would be a weapon heartily approved by the outside world to whom the argument between subversion and non-collaboration is largely academic.

Transkeian independence could indeed be Verwoerd's

fatal mistake, caused by his contempt for the intelligence of African people. It would be a pity were the Transkeian situation not tested to the full. So few ways are now open to the believer in non-violence who wishes to end oppression in South Africa. ●

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The Roots of Pan-Africanism

COLIN LEGUM

The following article is an abbreviated version from Africa—A Complete Handbook on the Continent. Published by Anthony Blond, London. 4 gns. (R8.40).

PAN-AFRICANISM DOES not lend itself to simple or precise definition; it is a pantechnicon for the convenient assembly of related ideas. They jostle, sometimes even contradict, each other; but they constitute a movement of ideas no less coherent than, say, Capitalism, Socialism, World Federalism, or Zionism. If Capitalism is a belief in private enterprise; if Socialism is a belief in a planned economy to achieve social equality; if World Federalism is a belief in a form of world government limiting the sovereignty of nations; if Zionism is a belief in a Jewish National State in Palestine—then Pan-Africanism can be similarly simplified into a belief in the *uniqueness* and spiritual unity of black people; an acknowledgment of their right to self-determination in Africa, and to be treated with dignity as equals in all parts of the world.

Pan-Africanism was born at the turn of the century as a protest against the "otherliness" of black men: the universal inferiority of his status. In 1900 it proclaimed that 'the problem of the twentieth century is the colour line(1)—the relation of the darker to the lighter races of men in Asia and Africa, in America and the islands of the sea'. For eighteen years longer than Moses' sojourn in the wilderness, its apostles developed their ideas in exile; then in 1958 Pan-Africanism was planted on the soil of Africa, where we can now see the beginnings of its struggles to find effective fulfilment.

Ten years or so after the holding of the first Zionist Conference, Dr. William E. Burghardt DuBois—the most important Pan-Africanist until the Second World War—wrote: '... The African movement means to us what the Zionist movement must mean to the Jews, the

centralization of race effort and the recognition of a racial fount. To help bear the burden of Africa does not mean any lessening of effort in our own problem at home. Rather it means increased interest'(2).

The nascent ideas of Pan-Africanism bubbled up simultaneously in the West Indies and in the United States; there was considerable cross-fertilization of ideas and competition of movement. Africans from South Africa and West Africa studying in the United States carried these ideas back home with them.

DuBois' insistence on the need to relate Negro activity in the United States to support for African liberation met with the accusation of 'dangerous diversification of energies which were needed in the fight for emancipation and civil rights at home'(3).

Marcus Garvey, a Jamaican, and his precursor, Dr. Albert Thorne, disagreed. Garvey's 'Back-to-Africa' movement (1897 to 1925) sought to lead all blacks back to 'where they belonged'; a sentiment he shared with the Ku Klux Klan with whom he did not scruple to co-operate (4).

After the First World War the two great Negro rivals of Pan-Africanism feuded bitterly—DuBois rejecting the displacement of American Negroes and championing self-determination for Africans; Garvey rabble-rousing his way to leadership of an enormous mass-following by his appeal to 'return to Africa'. Nevertheless, the rivals were united on two points. They linked the regeneration of the fortunes of the Negroes in the diaspora to the redemption of Africa as an *independent and united* continent. (Garvey proclaimed himself as the Provisional President of a 'Racial Empire'(5) of Africa; he died in 1940 in London without ever setting foot on the soil of Black Zion).

The reactions of DuBois and Garvey to their colour crystallize two themes in Pan-Africanism. Both are completely absorbed by this colour; but DuBois' attitude is defensively racist; Garvey's confidently, aggressively assertive.

Many of the ideas of Pan-Africanism flowed from

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this sense of blackness; and from the acceptance and rejection of what it stood for. To be *black* was to be different; it was a mark of inferiority and of oppression under colonialism and in the diaspora; it marked out the bearer for indignity. Accepting *blackness* had for long been part of a collusion with whites to accord to them a status of inferiority—socially, politically, culturally. To accept *blackness* proudly—as something to be set against whiteness; to look upon it as a reminder of the great glories of the African Past; to regard it as a tie with other peoples of colour; not to shudder away from it, but to embrace it—here was the Toynbeeian response to the challenge.

Proclaim all that is *black* noble instead of dirty; elevate *blackness* into beauty:

Woman nude, woman black
Clad in your colour which is life . . .
Your beauty strikes me to the heart
As lightning strikes the eagle(6)

Thus wrote a young poet who was later to become the first President of Senegal, Léopold Senghor. (He himself later married a white Frenchwoman).

And R. A. Armattoe of Togoland and the Gold Coast proclaimed:(7)

Our God is black
Black of eternal blackness
With large voluptuous lips
Matted hair and brown liquid eyes . . .
For in his image are we made
Our God is black.

Feelings of defeat and the longing for strength were articulated at the same time as *blackness* was embraced:(8)

Give me back my black dolls to play
The simple games of my instincts
To rest in the shadow of their laws
To recover my courage
my boldness
To feel myself myself
a new self from the one I was yesterday
yesterday
without complications
yesterday
When the hour of uprooting came.

'*To feel myself myself*': here we are close to the origin of the search for the African personality. '*A new self from the one I was yesterday . . . when the hour of uprooting came.*' The search for the African Personality is not for the old, traditional being; it is for Pericles' 'New Man'. The poet understood this, and the nationalist politician understands it; but it has led to many curious contortions among those who chauvinistically have sought to proclaim the traditional mores of African tribal life as the quintessence of African Personality. They fail to understand what Pan-African thinking has produced: that the old ways should be searched and interpreted to give substance and shape to the new African, regenerated from the old, but reflecting the totality of his experiences which extend far beyond his tribal traditional origins. Thus Pan-Africanism rejects tribalism; its nationalism soars above the tribe with its attachment to divisive, nuclear units.

The first discovered use(9) of the concept of 'African Personality' was by Edward Blyden, a West Indian born

in St. Thomas in 1874. When Majola Agbebi, a Baptist Yoruba, preached his inaugural address in 1902 at the founding of what has been called 'the first independent native African Church in West Africa'(10), Blyden believed it showed that 'Africa is struggling for a separate personality'(11). In that address Agbebi showed himself the harbinger of *négritude*: 'I am a Negro and all negro. I am black all over, and proud of my beautiful black skin . . .'

Through nearly a century of writing, up to the end of the Second World War, there were two streams in the speeches, the poetry and the writings of Negroes: the reaction against *whiteism*, and the acceptance of *blackism*. Often the two streams were distinctive—the one a cry for vengeance; the other a demand for justice. Sometimes the two streams came together: Black justice would settle accounts with White injustice.

* * *

In his 'Notes on a Return to the Native Country' we encounter some of the ideas that have distinguished Aimé Césaire's intellectual contribution to Pan-Africanism. It was Césaire who first wrote of *négritude*, a central theme of Pan-Africanism.

My negritude is not a rock, its deafness
hurled against the clamour of the day
My negritude is not a film of dead water
on the dead eye of the earth
My negritude is neither a tower nor
a cathedral.

It plunges into the red flesh of the earth
It plunges into the burning flesh of the sky
It pierces the opaque prostration by its
upright patience(12).

Sartre defined *négritude* as 'a sole idea—to make manifest the black soul . . . from Haiti to Cayenne'. It has also been defined as denoting a certain quality which is common to the thoughts and behaviour of Negroes(13). It is difficult to define precisely because it expresses a mystical concept—'the oneness of all blacks'; the idea that whether a man is a Negro peon in Haiti, an Oba in Benin, a Negro cane-cutter in Cuba, a Negro taxi-driver in New York or Rio de Janeiro, or a coffee planter on Kilimanjaro, there is a single Negro consciousness.

In 1956 the World Congress of Black Writers and Artists held their first Pan-African meeting at the Sorbonne in Paris (still in the diaspora). Sixty delegates came from Africa and the New World. The octogenarian Principal of the University of Haiti, Dr. Price-Mars, opened the conference with these words: 'We can claim to represent a vast multitude of human-beings, covering a large part of the surface of the earth, particularly in Africa. We are all distinguished—or nearly all—by an indelible peculiarity: the more or less dark colour of our skin. Of this peculiarity, the hateful commercialism of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries took advantage in order to send millions of our ancestors into slavery across the Atlantic. But the course of the world has turned full circle, and through an extreme irony of fate it is this very same distinctive sign that we use in this twentieth century to affirm, exalt and glorify the culture of the black peoples. This Congress has no other objective'(14).

There are two other aspects of the early beginnings of Pan-Africanism that command attention. One is the lack of support for ideas of violence. I have already cited the support given by the Fifth Pan-African Conference to Gandhi's methods. DuBois always argued the case for peaceful means as against violence.

The other is the exclusiveness of *blackism*. Did it rule out people of other races in Africa, or in the independence struggle? Both in theoretical argument and in practice the answer is no. Garvey, as we have seen, was ready to work with the Ku Klux Klan. DuBois writes with appreciation of the efforts of American white liberals who supported him in setting up the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured Peoples, and who subsequently co-operated with him in organizing the first four Pan-African conferences in Europe and America. The fifth Pan-African Congress was opened by the Mayor of Manchester and supported by British Liberals and Socialists. In his most racist work *Black Princess* DuBois' hero valiantly tries to keep the 'broader human mass in view'(15). And there is Césaire's philosophy:(16)

. . . you know my worldwide love,
know it is not hatred against other races . . .

* * *

It has become fashionable to record the history of Pan-African congresses (before the first historic conference on African soil which Dr. Kwame Nkrumah convened in Accra in 1958) as five in number; four organized by DuBois—Paris (1919), London (1921), London and Lisbon (1923), New York (1927)—and the fifth in Manchester (1945), organized under the direction of DuBois by the British Section of the Pan-African Federation; where for the first time representatives from Africa themselves played a large part in the leadership with the West Indian theoretician, George Padmore.

But as Shepperson has recently shown(17), it is clear that there was a sixth congress; it was in fact the first. It was held in London in 1900 under the leadership of a West Indian barrister, H. Sylvester Williams. 'A moving spirit was Bishop Alexander Walters of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, a neglected figure of Negro American history and a believer in the inevitability of a "Negro Cecil Rhodes" '(18).

Sylvester Williams was the first to use the term Pan-African, as DuBois himself has admitted; although in his earlier writings he omitted reference to this conference, correcting himself in his later works. DuBois himself participated in the 1900 conference where he made his famous statement: 'The problem of the twentieth century is the colour line . . .'

Much has happened in Africa since that first Pan-African conference in 1900; but some problems remain the same. It is ironical that the 1900 conference addressed a Memorial to Queen Victoria on two questions which still remain with us. They protested 'against the treatment of Africans in South Africa and Rhodesia,' and succeeded in eliciting from Joseph Chamberlain a pledge that "Her Majesty's Government will not overlook the interests and welfare of the native races"(19).

Between 1900 and 1939 the leadership of Pan-

Africanism remained firmly with DuBois and his American and West Indian supporters. During the war years it came increasingly into the hands of a West Indian group associated with Mr. George Padmore, and with African students in London, where it stayed until 1958 when Dr. Nkrumah successfully planted it in Africa.

There is one Pan-African figure who deserves to be mentioned, for although Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe—now Governor-General of Nigeria—was not at the famous Fifth Pan-African Conference in Manchester, he was nevertheless largely instrumental in spreading the concept of a West African Federation of States, giving form to a concept of federalism which successive Pan-African conference decisions have since evolved.

The challenge of Pan-Africanism has been summed up by George Padmore in this famous challenge. "In our struggle for national freedom, human dignity and social redemption, Pan-Africanism offers an ideological alternative to Communism on the one side and Tribalism on the other. It rejects both white racialism and black chauvinism. It stands for racial co-existence on the basis of absolute equality and respect for human personality. Pan-Africanism looks above the narrow confines of class, race, tribe and religion. In other words, it wants equal opportunity for all. Talent to be rewarded on the basis of merit. Its vision stretches beyond the limited frontiers of the nation-state. Its perspective embraces the federation of regional self-governing countries and their ultimate amalgamation into a *United States of Africa*. In such a Commonwealth, all men, regardless of tribe, race, colour or creed, shall be equal and free. And all the national units comprising the regional federations shall be autonomous in all matters of common interest to the African Union. This is our vision of the Africa of Tomorrow—the goal of Pan-Africanism"(20).

1. W. E. B. DuBois. *The Souls of Black Folk*. (1903, New York.)
2. *Crisis*, 17, 4, p. 166 (February, 1919); quoted by Harold R. Isaacs in *Race*, (Nov. 1960.)
3. George Shepperson. *Journal of African History*. (Cambridge University Press, Vol. 1, No. 2.)
4. G. Padmore. *Pan-Africanism or Communism?* (Dobson, 1956, London.)
5. Marcus Garvey. *Philosophy and Opinions*, Vol. II. (Universal Publishing House, 1923-6, New York.)
6. *An Anthology of West African Verse*. Edited by Olumbe Bassir. (1957, Ibadan.)
7. Olumbe Bassir (Ed.); *Ibid*.
8. Leon Damas. *Black Orpheus*. (January 1958, Ibadan, Nigeria.)
9. George Shepperson; *Ibid*.
10. *African Times*. (5 July 1899, London.)
11. George Shepperson; *Ibid*.
12. Translated by Samuel Allen. *Africa as seen by Negroes*. (*Présence Africaine*, 1958, Paris)
13. *Black Orpheus*. (January 1958, Ibadan.)
14. Quoted by Janheinz Jahn. *Black Orpheus*. (September 1957, Ibadan.)
15. Isaacs; *Ibid*.
16. Aimé Césaire. Four Poems (translated by Miriam Koshland). *Black Orpheus*. (January 1938, Ibadan.)
17. George Shepperson; *Ibid*.
18. George Shepperson; *Ibid*.
19. Quoted by Shepperson; *Ibid*.
20. Padmore; *Ibid*.